I find the question about morse code testing to be quite an emotional topic among most ham operators, but I would like to make my comments as emotion free as I possibly can.

It seems readily apparent to me that there is no longer any need for morse code testing, or a requirement for it's proficiency for any level of amateur radio operation. I'm sure by now you've heard all the arguments. Those presented by the No Code International (NCI) group in their petition do indeed sum it up all very nicely.

I have been a broadcast radio engineer for 28 years. I hold what is now called a General Radiotelephone Operators License (GROL) or what used to be called a First Class License. I have built radio equipment since I was 11 years old. Transmitters, receivers, mountains of accessories and do dads. I have had an avid interest in electronics and radio since I was a small boy. I have built dozens of transmitters for other "hams" that I myself was never allowed to operate. And they were unbale to design or build them, but they could speak on the air with them simply because they know the code! I spent many years as a 'watcher" rather than as a participant in ham radio simply because of the morse code. For whatever reason I couldn't learn it. As an adult the "No-Code" Tech license came along and I got my ticket two years ago. I am very active in many aspects of ham radio including SSB, AM, FM and digital communications. I work with RACES, ARES and Skywarn. I have yet to find a need for the morse code method of operating. I do enjoy older styles of operating, particularly on 6 meter AM with vintage tube radios I have restored.

I do fall into the category of a well qualified radio technician who is restricted by the code for no reason. Now, as a very busy adult with four kids, one grand child and many activities, going to the time and effort to learn morse code simple as a "rite of passage" onto the HF frequencies is just plain silly, when I have no intention of using the code.

Now that morse code is no longer required by world standards, why should the US continue to place this restriction on it's hams? Think of the potential growth of the ranks of hams, the increased equipment sales which would be good for the manufacturers who would be able to sell radios at better prices, and for the parts suppliers who would love to supply tinkers like myself.

Of all the reasons presented to keep the morse requirement, I can find none that are legitimate:

In the old days knowing the code was necessary because that was all there was.

it is no longer as a practical means of emergency communication. There are hundreds of modern day examples that demonstrate this.

Some will say it keeps the idiots, or less dedicated people off the bands. If that is true how did all the idiots we can find on the HF bands get there if the code kept them out?

I often see "pro-code" hams say "Well, the next thing you'll want to do is eliminate drivers exams, or pilots exams" etc. No. We don't want to eliminate exams, just

eliminate having to learn ONE of thousands of operating modes. We don't make hams prove they can type at 25 WPM, which, really they should..what with all the digital modes that require keyboard entry. We don't require them to demonstrate the ability to speak intelligibly or intelligently to use voice, and on and on. Today the FAA is no longer requiring pilots to learn to rig the wires on a biplane, navigate by the stars, or pull the prop thru to clear the cylinders on a radial engine. Drivers don't have to demonstrate hand cranking a car to start it, or to advance the spark and gas by hand with little levers on the steering wheel like they did 60 years ago. times change and the testing requirements need to keep up with the times. It's like telling a guy who wants a fishing license he has to demonstrate tying trout flies to catch a few perch, even if he has no interest, desire, or intention of ever fishing for trout!

The only logical, efficient and proper step to take is to simply remove the need for any morse code testing for HF use. there may be some other considerations to come down the pike with reference to band plans, etc.. but at the moment the only simple and proper thing to do is simply remove the morse testing, giving current Techs the privileges of a "Tech Plus" and let those who pass the General or Extra written exams onto the bands that they would receive if they could demonstrate CW skills. At this time it just seems like any other plan would be unnecessarily complex and would bog down the whole process needlessly.

If we review part 97.1 of the FCC rules it states:

97.1 Basis and purpose.
The rules and regulations in this Part are designed to provide an amateur radio service having a fundamental purpose as expressed in the following principles:
(a) Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.
(b) Continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art.
(c) Encouragement and improvement of the amateur service through rules which provide for advancing skills in both the communications and technical phases of the art.
(d) Expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of trained operators, technicians, and electronics experts.
(e) Continuation and extension of the amateur's unique ability to enhance international goodwill.

We are to ADVANCE the art, not remain buried in old technologies and traditional ways just because that's the way it's always been! Lets make the bold move and bring amateur radio in the US up to a level we can be proud of!

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